

# critical digest



139 East 47 St. NY 17 NY  
EL 5-6894 T.M. Kraus

Jun 26, 1961 Vol XIII No 14 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter Digest Service-Published 52 weeks a year-\$25 per year

## This Week in NYC

Broadway productions which had stayed at a constant level for many weeks started to thin with the closing of four shows. The Happiest Girl in the World after 97 performances and The Devil's Advocate after 117 closed on schedule. Billy Barnes People closed after 7 performances at an estimated loss of \$75,000. Unless a second "miracle" of the season takes place, Pal Joey will fold after 29 performances at the City Center, due entirely to a dearth of sales of low priced seats. Several others are expected to close Jul 1.

## Plays

Let It Ride musical version of "Three Men on a Horse" set for Oct 6 at O'Neill... When No One Is Looking, new psychological murder play by Frederick Knott to be directed and presented by George Schaefer, Oct 26 at Belasco... A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, new musical by Burt Shevelove-Larry Gelbart-Stephen Sondheim, directed by Jerome Robbins, to be presented by Griffith-Prince Dec 28... Along Came a Bluebird new comedy by Owen Arno with Loring Smith, Orson Bean to be directed and presented by Shepard Traube.

## Players

Flora Elkins subbed for ill Anne Jackson, Rhinoceros, for several performances... Lee Tracy, who leaves The Best Man Jun 30, honored at "Midnight Picnic" for his 35th anniversary in theatre... James Herst, currently playing the lead male role at matinee performances of The Unsinkable Molly Brown, signed for lead in Sail Away... Nan Martin to star in The Short Happy Life... Sumi Tatum, Japanese nightclub singer, to be featured in Blood, Sweat and Stanley Poole.

## Drama Desk

Laurence Olivier, Joan Plowright, Richard Burton, Tammy Grimes picked as best leading players of season in Variety's 23rd poll of NY drama critics.

## NYC Calendar

The Voice of the Turtle-41st St Theatre (125 W 41) 6/27. Barbara Griner-Eleanor Horn present first two week "All Star Summer Comedy Festival" revival. With Mindy Carson, Jean Sheperd, Joyce Randolph, directed by Matt Cimber.

3 American Plays-New Playwrights Theatre (West 3rd & Thompson St) 6/28. Lee Paton presents and directs three short plays. Hector with Henrietta Storm, West of Moon with Joseph Ponzecchi, Paul Giovanni, both by Robert Heide; and Blood Bugle by Harry Tierney, Jr. with James Cahill, Jerry Pagano, William Severs.

## Broadway Business

Variety reports power failure hurt already dipping business. Sellouts continue at Mary Mary, Camelot, Sound of Music and Carnival, which reported 30 standees the night of blackout.

## Award Dept

Sam S Shubert Foundation Gold Medal award presented to set designer Oliver Smith for his "outstanding individual work in the theatre." He is represented this season by--Becket, Camelot, Mary Mary, Unsinkable Molly Brown, A Taste of Honey, and Under the Yum Yum Tree.

## Theatre & Radio TV Notes

The Sandbox by Edward Albee to be presented Jul 2 on CBS-TV Look Up & Live as first of series of productions by new and established playwrights... Age of Kings BBC TV Shakespeare series which was seen twice weekly in NYC and Washington, D. C. this winter, to be rebroadcast on NET Educational TV, sponsored by Humble Oil Co.

Poised for Violence a new full length play by Jean Reavey will be heard Jul 2 on WBAI-FM(NY), directed by Maurice Edwards.

## Off Broadway

A new Off Broadway playhouse will be set up at 434 Lafayette St by Dermot McNamara-Helena Carroll-Quinton Raines for their fall production of Sharon's Grave...No Corner in Heaven by Joseph Caruso, Jr to be presented Jul 8 at Eleanor Gould Theatre, Allen St... The Student Prince to be revived by American Savoyards Jul 13 at Greenwich Mews... Happy Days a new play by Samuel Beckett to be presented by Richard Barr-Clinton Wilder in the fall... Shame the Devil a musical version of "School for Scandal" by Ed Menerth, Jr-Arthur Brandon to be directed next season by Dorothy Raedler... The Banker's Daughter a new musical by Edward Eliscu-Sol Kaplan to be directed in fall by David Brooks... Stratford, Ont, production of The Pirates of Penzance staged by Tyrone Guthrie to open Phoenix season Sept 6... No Exit revival Sept by Fred Goldman-Louis Silverman to be directed by John Bockman.

## TheatreBook Notes

"Playwriting" by Bernard Grebanier, published by Thomas Crowell Co (\$5.75) a do-it-yourself manual for the starting playwright contains examples from classic and modern plays.

## Theatre Film Notes

Judy Holliday to star in The Great Sebastians film... Don Murray, Henry Fonda signed for Advice and Consent film.

## Legal Dept

League of NY Theatres asked four craft unions to extend contract one year with no changes. ATPAM, press agents and managers, to agree.

## Play Diary

Much Ado About Nothing - Central Park 7/5... No Corner in Heaven - Gould 7/8... Susan Slept Here - 41st St 7/11... Student Prince - G Mews 7/13.

# DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

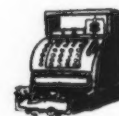
**As You Like It**- Stratford, Conn- 6/15. 5 pro-and 2 con- **Herald Tribune**, **Mirror**- filed on American Shakespeare Festival's opening production of season staged in modern dress by Word Baker with Kim Hunter, Donald Harron, Donald Davis, Hiram Sherman, Carrie Nye. Pro voters ranged from mild approval for an uneven production to two rave notices, while con voters did not think the changing costume and speech styles worked. Affirmative viewer Taubman, Times, okayed it despite reasons for discontent, he found much pleasure to be derived in production which captures a great deal of essence. On the debit side Times man put the occasionally labored and fussy direction and Patrick Hines' ridiculous portrayal of the Duke. Chapman, News, enjoyed attractive and generally clean spoken company, though he felt the director may have gone too far in preciousness and unbelievable pose in staging some scenes. Herridge, Post, liked the generally fine cast the resourceful direction and the screwy bits of stage business, even though pace needs quickening at start. Ast - on, World Telegram & Sun, raved over whale of a production and the director who worked like a demon to produce action from the enjoyable lot of performers. McClain, Journal American, cheered intimate, delightful modern dress version, which projects atmosphere of pastoral gaiety, with the semi-modern dress bring the behavior and speech closer to the audience. Dissenter Morgenstern, Herald Tribune, felt the players had trouble finding their way through baffling surroundings in which acting styles and costumes styles kept changing. The players he marked capable, the direction vigorous, though occasionally careless. Coleman, Mirror, panned the strangest production of the Bard's comedy he ever saw, the direction too busy with no unified style, and with Hunter turning in a too cute performance. Critic doubts if production honored Bard, which was purpose of Housatonic River theatre.

**Macbeth**- Stratford, Conn 6/16. 4 pro- Times, News, Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- and 2 con-Herald Tribune, Post- filed on second production in American Shakespeare Festival repertory, directed by Jack Landau with Pat Hingle, Jessica Tandy, Donald Davis, Donald Harron, Richard Waring. Most of affirmative side credited realistic production and Tandy's excellent portrayal as the high-points, while negative side felt it was too ponderous and that Hingle's Method characterization was unbelievable. Two critics- News and Post- mentioned that fog machine was working overtime. Pro leader Taubman, Times, recommended rousing production with able performances throughout, Tandy a study in leashed ambition and range, Hingle with drive and stature though his voice does not have quite enough range of inflections. Chapman, News, applauded great spectacle, visual excitement with Hingle really splendid, others robust. McClain, Journal American, thanked Tandy's attractive, intransigent performance in the swift and vociferous production, with Hingle not quite failing but perhaps never recovering from J. B. role inflections. Aston, WTS, voiced mild approval for commendable production, praising Tandy but fearing that Hingle was uncomfortable in role. Con voter Crist, Herald Tribune, feared that the actors and play struggled against the direction which was brimming with sound, fury and B-movie effects, but with little else. Hingle's rendition of the soliloquies was the flattest, dreariest rendition the Arts Editor has heard since Jason Robards tried two years ago at Cambridge, Mass. Herridge, Post, condemned the ponderous production with neither dramatic excitement nor poetic clarity, with the fault mainly Hingle's, who roars and intones so bombastically and so monotonously that the audience is almost hypnotized into numbness.

## NY CRITICS AT STRATFORD, ONTARIO

**Coriolanus**-Stratford, Ontario- 6/19. 2 pro- Times, Herald Tribune- filed on opening of Shakespearean Festival of Canada season, directed by Michael Langham with Paul Scofield, Eleanor Stuart, Bernard Behrens, Douglas Campbell. Production is set at time of the French Revolution with costumes and sets by Tanya Moiseiwitsch. Taubman, Times, applauded vivid production, the powerful performance of Scofield and the spirited, colorful staging of a challenging play. But Times' traveling aisle-sitter did not think play of Rome fit ideally into Paris 18th century costumes. Kerr, Herald Tribune, also doubted that costume schedule helped, but otherwise he agreed it was a production to be reckoned with and to be seen.

**Henry VIII**- Stratford, Ontario- 6/20 2 pro-Times, Herald Tribune- filed on second production in repertory of groups 9th summer season, staged by George McCowan with Douglas Campbell, Kate Reid, Douglas Rain. Both Taubman, Times, and Kerr, Herald Tribune, remarked that play itself is not one of Shakespeare's best, and then both okayed handsome, spectacle production presented. Taubman approved grand, sumptuous-looking show, encompassed with dash and panache, directed with pace and fluidity, acted by gifted performances. Kerr advised audience to remember the peppermints when viewing the excellently mounted production of the dull play.



TICKET  
PRICE  
VIEWS

Inquiring Photographer Jimmy Jemal, News, asked Lambs Club members their opinion on "Are theatre tickets priced too high." Bernard Grossman, lawyer, felt they are for those who consider theatre a way of life, but not for those who feel theatre is a luxury... Joseph Gibson, director, did not think so compared with the \$3.50 price for tickets 15 years ago, the increase is just inflation... Val Valenti, singer, suggested that if theatre people were good business men they would realize that the top price based on today's economy should be \$7.50, not \$9.60 Robert Farrell, publisher, thinks prices are too high for the merchandise the theatres are currently selling. Charles Curran, producer, did not think theatre prices are too high considering expenses for rent and featherbedding... George Lipton, director, believes prices are out of reach of the new theatre going public fed up with the tripe and mediocrity of TV.



THEATRE  
RECORD  
COMMENTS

**Beautiful Is the World**, 1934 Lehar operatta and Milloecker's **Die Dubarry** 1879 musical presented on Epic Records by Radio Vienna recommended by Watt, News. Sharply skilled performances by chorus, orchestra and leading, though unidentified players, perform the lovely music. The Milloecker classic sounds remarkable fresh, music critic noted.



GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

**ACTORS THE THING...** The real fascination of watching a good actor act is the most obvious reason for going to the theatre other than bowing down before literary or technical triumphs, states Kerr, Herald Tribune. But we surrender to this fascination nowadays only when the actor is so utterly divorced from his play, or from any play, that we feel free to suspend our penchant for dramatic criticism and observe him in a vacuum. The habit of becoming such passionate admirers of perfect plays that we wouldn't think of going to one that has the least trace of a seam showing may conceal a somewhat horrifying truth that we don't much like the theatre, and are glad of an excuse for giving it the go-by.

**COLUMN TIPS...** New theatre to be constructed in former Miami News building by Irving Maidman, Frank Hale, Huntington Hartford, hears Farrell, World Telegram & Sun... Mickey Rooney and Suzy Parker sought by Jed Harris for drama next season, notes McHarry, News... Eartha Kitt to return to NY in 1962 The Widow Paris musical, lists Kilgallen, Journal American.

**NEW THEATRE NEEDS...** New theatres is what the NYC theatre really needs, comments McClain, Journal American, who dreams of day when some sort of a civic center will be constructed that will house a dozen or more commercial theatres. Critic in his frequent excursions has had his jeans rent asunder by a broken spring, has sat on an aisle seat which was banked sideways like a roller coaster, one which tilted forward, and another which bit him him every time he stood up.

**CRITICAL THOUGHTS...** Death of George S Kaufman took away the last American playwright who thought the human race was funny, obits Chapman, News... So many law firms are involved in the legal hassle over My Fair Lady rights that road companies of the Bar Assn should be sent out suggests Phillips, Mirror... Poor seats, high prices and vanity productions are some of the reasons why confidence has been destroyed in Off Broadway, fears Coleman, Mirror.

**DRAMA MAIL BOX...** Herald Tribune reader votes for Jean Dalrymple who is owed many, many, many thanks for her part in providing good theatre at City Center, whatever differences may be about the Porgy and Bess production... Revolving fund idea suggested by Taubman, Times, praised by The Blacks co-producer Andre Gregory. It is an idea of great originality and scope that transcends limiting boundries of commercialism and gives to the art of theatre the respect that in America is long overdue.

**TALENT TIPS...** Mention that actor Brett Pearson was working as doorman at Embers Club, NYC, resulted in his being signed as understudy for The Unsinkable Molly Brown, reports Winchell, Mirror... Recent salute about puppet designer Tom Tichenor, Carnival, by Coleman, Mirror, finds him fully employed on TV.

As You Like It at Stratford, Conn, is a lively, enjoyable, ingenious modern dress version of the Bard's forest love lark. The leading players are excellent, both in transmitting the beauty and poetry of the classic, and in carrying out the many downright wild, humorous pieces of stage-business devised by director Word Baker. But many of the younger minor players are merely sticks, who would be dull in any production of Shakespeare, be it set in the 16th or 20th centuries. But once the story and verse is back in the hands of the capable, professional leading players, two of them by the way from Canada, the comedy is a delight and almost believable.

While theatre dreamers continue to ponder how wonderful it would be to recapture the 42nd St film houses for legit, two of the famed playhouses have been snapped off the market. A 35 story skyscraper home for the toy industry will replace the New Amsterdam Theatre and the Ziegfeld Theatre Roof Garden next year.

Why the \$1.95 tickets to Pal Joey at the City Center's enjoyable revival were not sold cannot remain a mystery for long if the next generation of theatre-goers is to be properly trained. The Phoenix and City Center have become popular because of their always high level of production and low prices. Students flock to both by the busload. But the status stigma of balcony seats has somehow affected even these loyal young playgoers. How, why, when and what can be done quickly are paramount theatre problems that need an immediate solution.

American actors took a beating in the Variety poll. Three of the four awards for best acting of the year were won by British players, and Tammy Grimes probably survived as a winner because some of the reviewers thought her Boston accent was really English.

NY theatre will just have to build some new playhouses and by next season. How else can those mile-long titles--How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying and A Funny Thing Happened to Me on the Way to the Forum fit on theatre marquees and still leave room for the required by contract listings of star, author, director and critics quotes.

If there were any young, unsung drama critics working on newspapers across the country who felt that the George Jean Nathan estate grant establishing awards to encourage and train new critics would somehow fall on them--they can forget it. The college professors picked established director-critic-teacher Harold Clurman as one of their first award winners, and on the basis of a very popular theatre book of the season. Somedays it is almost as tough being a critic as it is being an actor.



# OUTER BROADWAY THEATRE LETTER

## College Theatre

Univ of New Mexico, Albu - querque, to erect \$5 million Fine Arts Center for theatre, music, art departments, dedication set for 1963 ...Greg Falls, Univ of Vermont, Burlington, appointed director of Univ of Washington, Seattle, School of Drama...Howard Bay to join William Saroyan next semester at Purdue Univ, Lafayette, Ind.

Beloit, Wisc, College Court Theatre opens summer repertory season Jun 27 with Waltz of the Torturers, directed by Kirk Denmark ...Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, Drama Dept summer season at Okoboji Summer Theatre, Spirit Lake, Iowa, opens Jun 29 with Rape of the Belt. Guidebook to Bigamy, a new play by staff member Vernon Weedle to be presented Aug 1 ... Univ of Minn Showboat to present 100 performances of Bloomer Girl at Miss River ports...Bard College, Annadale-on-Hudson, presented outdoor production of Twelfth Night at commencement weekend Jun 24, 23.

College sponsored theatre circuit set up by university extensions may be formed to tour UCLA Theatre Group productions, Dr Abbot Kaplan, told UPI-World Telegram Sun. UCLA group was formed due to dearth of professional theatre in L. A. area. He hopes that other university extensions will sponsor professional companies so that exchange tours of productions can be set up.

## Communications Group

College and community theatre actors were advised to go to regional theatre centers such as San Francisco, Dallas, Chicago and Pittsburgh, instead of NYC, by Nan Martin on her recent tour of 23 theatre members of Ford Foundation's Theatre Communications Group, she told Ross, Herald Tribune.

## Drama Desk

First set of George Jean Nathan Criticism Awards of \$4000 each administered by Cornell Univ won by Harold Clurman, Nation, for his collection of theatre reviews "Lies Like Truth" and C L Barber, Amherst, Mass, College for "Shakespeare Festive Comedy."

## Summer Playhouses

North Jersey Playhouse, Paramus, will open 14 week season Jul 17, Robert Ludlum, producer - director. Theatre retained in super market site by Alstores Realty Corp who will install a 50 ton air-conditioner... "Phoenix Summer Festival" at John Drew Theatre, East Hampton, NY opens Jul 17 with The Lady's Not For Burning with Juliet Randall, Rochelle Oliver and James Patterson, directed by Lawrence Arrick...Saranac Lake, NY, Summer Theatre opens Jul 4 with Bells Are Ringing... Canton, Conn, Show Shop season started with Thieves' Carnival, Otis Smith director, Mel Curran producer.

Future Perfect summer tryout of new Whitfield Cook comedy with Martha Scott opens Jul 24 at Cape Playhouse, Dennis, Mass, Aaron Frankel directs... Farewell, Farewell Eugenia to tour with Enid Markey, Zasu Pitts... Two Queens of Love and Beauty by Bill Hoffman to be tested Aug 10 at Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Pa, starring Ann Harding ...Marge Champion to portray leading role in Invitation to a March Aug 7 at La Jolla, Calif, Playhouse.

Vagabond Players, Flat Rock, N. C, named "Official State of North Carolina Theatre" by state assembly. Group founded in 1937.

July-Aug schedule of new plays presented at Pioneer Playhouse, Danville, Ky, all directed by Irving Strouse, include--Blue Chips by John McKay, Jr (nom de plume of Hollywood writer), The Sparta Fox by Andrew Carroll Bidwell, Santa Barbara, Calif... The Animal Fair by George Selden, NYC ... The Bromley Touch by Kay Arthur, Ossining, NY... All Men Kill by Albert Brenner, Haverhill, Mass... Oh Gentle Trout by Perry Stieglitz, Washington, D. C... The Tiger Kittens by Albert Zuckerman, New Haven, Conn.

## Community Theatres

Seven Conn theatres to present seven week season at Country Playhouse, Brookfield, Conn, each playing one week-end. Westport Community Players, Dramalites of Washington, Redding Players, Newton Players, Country Players of Brookfield, Holiday Players of New Milford, Demi Opera Theatre.



## Road Shows

Leave It to Jane NY cast will open Sept 5 at Prudential Bldg Theatre, Chicago for scheduled five week run, presented by Bill Rach-Charles Comiskey- Joseph Vaughan... Noh Plays of Japan will tour US in 1963, presented by Mary Bran.

## Award Dept

A Tide in the Potomac by Dorian & Miriam Weber, NYC, which won second place in Baton Rouge, La Little Theatre contest, currently presented there... La Loco by Ernesto Fuentas won \$500 Stanley Award presented by Wagner College, Staten Island, NY Writers Conference.

## London

They Might be Giants a new play by James Goldman opens at Theatre Royal Jun 28... One for the Pot a new farce by Ray Cooney-Tony Hilton due Aug 2 at Whitehall... Do Re Mi slated for Oct 22 with Max Bygraves... The Greek Tragedy Theatre, Athens presented 10 day program at Scala with Electra, The Coephori and The Eumenides, Dimitrios Rondiris director... Bye Bye Birdie opened at Her Majesty's to restrained critical approval with reviewers noting enthusiastic first night audience helped musical.

## US Repertory

NY Repertory Theatre is name picked by Actors Studio company which opens Latin American tour Jul 11. Betty Field and daughter Judy Rice have joined troupe ... Living Theatre productions of The Connection and Many Loves drew rave critical and audience response in Rome.

## Europe

West Side Story touring company debut in Munich played to sell-out crowds, rave notices.

"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.



